

# The Letter of James

## Faith that works!

### Study 6 – What is true faith?

#### Introduction

James begins this section of his letter by asking if someone who claims to have faith but has no deeds can really expect that such a faith will save them. In posing that question, James gets us thinking about what true faith really is. Many people make 'claims' to faith (v14) but how can we know if that faith is genuine? It's not only a question we will ask of others, but more importantly, a question we must ask of ourselves. One of the problems we face is the same problem that was faced by James's first readers; the word 'faith' means many different things to different people. Think for a moment about how the word is used by many today. Some people will say 'I've lost my faith.' In this context they use the word to refer to the religion they grew up with. Or you might have had someone say to you, 'I wish I had your kind of faith.' Here, faith becomes something that people are either born with or born without. It refers to the sort of personality that is trusting (or gullible!) rather than cynical. The word is also used negatively when people are accused of having 'blind faith'. That refers to believing in something with no evidence to prove it. Faith means different things to different people. But what is important to realize is that none of these uses of the word comes close to what the bible understands faith to mean. And tonight, James wants to set the record straight.

#### Read James 2:14-26



#### Think

1. How would you answer the question James poses in v14?





## Apply



### Mind

What part of God's word you find hardest to believe (the hardest to trust in)?



### Heart

Why do we sometimes not act on what we know is true?



### Life

In light of this passage, is there a behaviour you need to 'put off' or 'put on' to make your faith genuine? Ask the group to pray for you in the week ahead.